Data Enrichment Vendor Engagement Guidance

How to use this Document

This document is intended to guide procurers of data enrichment services on what questions to ask their data enrichment vendors through different phases of their engagement. We have split the questions into the following phases: Vendor Vetting, Contract Negotiation, Project Management/Monitoring, and Post-Project. Oftentimes, conversations between vendors and AI companies can focus on cost and timeline while discussions about worker experience get unintentionally deprioritized. Improving conditions for workers will require companies across the data supply chain to work together. We hope that by outlining the questions and topics that should be asked about worker experience throughout the vendor engagement process, impact on workers will be brought to the forefront. These questions are intended to get companies across the supply chain aligned on their policies, better monitor their practices, and make improvements.

This document is part of PAI's Responsible Data Enrichment Sourcing Library

HOW WAS THIS CREATED?	NEXT STEPS FOR THIS RESOURCE	CREDITING
The first iteration of this document was drafted by PAI based on PAI's white paper, "Data Enrichment Sourcing Guidelines," and input from PAI's community of practice on data enrichment practice.	• Gather more input on these from the broader multistakeholder community during an open comment period and targeted feedback sessions with industry, civil society, human rights experts, supply chain experts, workers and their representatives, and researchers. • Incorporate feedback/comments into a next version of this document. • Include a refined version of this resource in PAI resource library for relevant actors across the supply chain to use.	In any future iterations of this document, we will include a section on who contributed to it and the settings in which feedback was collected.

PHASE 1: Vetting Each Other

PURPOSE: Ensure that vendors onboarded or used for a particular project will be positioned to work with you to meet responsible data enrichment practices.

QUESTION CATEGORY	QUESTIONS / DISCUSSION TOPICS
Wages for Workers PLEASE REFER TO GUIDELINE 1	How do you ensure workers are paid above living wage? How often is this adjusted?
	How are payment rates set? By task, hour, etc.
	How is this validated? (e.g. a timed run-through of tasks), Does this validation include time taken for workers to do all activities necessary to complete a task, including reading all instructions etc.?
	Are there any assumptions made by payment calculator tools available through this vendor that need to be addressed?
	How specific is the location data that this vendor can provide for workers (to be used to set local living wage)?
	Are there any additional costs to workers to work with this vendor? Are there mechanisms to make up for this with compensation?
	Are workers paid in cash?
	Are payments held in a vendor account or directly debited into the worker's account?
	Are there any additional forms of compensation or benefits for workers?
	Are wages ever withheld or delayed for any reason? If so, how often and why?
Piloting Capabilities PLEASE REFER TO GUIDELINE 2	What experience does this vendor have with the kinds of work/tasks that are being asked of them and what practices have they use in the past?
	What capabilities does this platform or vendor provide to pilot the data enrichment project with a subset of workers (to get workers' feedback on the clarity of instructions and potential issues) before scaling the project?
Size of Worker Pool PLEASE REFER TO GUIDELINE 3	How many workers are available from this vendor?
	What is the geographic distribution of the workers through this vendor?
Demographic/Experience Level of Working Pool Available PLEASE REFER TO GUIDELINE 3	Is information about expertise and demographic data available?
	What type of experience and expertise do these workers have? Does it match the the experience/expertise needed to perform the relevant data enrichment task well?
	What type of continued training can be made available to these workers?
	How are workers recruited by this vendor?
Training Procedures for Working Pool PLEASE REFER TO GUIDELINE 4	How does this vendor train their workers on the specifics of new projects?
	How does the vendor assess task comprehension?
	How often does the vendor incorporate "checks" during the engagement?
Mechanisms for Communication PLEASE REFER TO GUIDELINE 5	What mechanisms for communicating with workers are available with this platform/vendor?
	What mechanisms exist for workers to ask questions, report technical issues, and communicate feedback? What mechanisms/policies could be put into place?
	What mechanisms are in place for workers to report issues around their working conditions, whether to the vendor or to a third party?
	How are changes in schedule or work demands communicated to workers? I.e. if a change in schedule or deadlines require an increase in hours, how far in advance are workers informed? Do they have the opportunity to decline a sudden change in hours demanded without suffering repercussions?
	How is workers' consent around data privacy gathered?
	How are workers informed of their rights, whether UN-defined human rights, local laws, etc.? How does the vendor communicate to the workers the vendors' status of compliance with these laws and their recognition of these rights?
Additional Considerations	What data is collected about workers and their work?
	How is this data collected? (e.g. is this active tracking of keystrokes, other forms of surveillance?)
	If data is collected on workers, are they clearly informed about the specifics of this data collection?
	What privacy policies apply to workers' data?
	What mental health support, paid sick leave, and other benefits are available for workers?
	How might companies partner with vendors to provide additional wellness related benefits?
	How are workers managed?
	What are the options or processes available to workers if they want to move to a different project?
	What were the worker attrition rates over the past 12 months, broken into regrettable attrition (e.g., worker quit) and non-regrettable attrition (e.g., worker let go because of performance issues or misconduct)?
	What are the vendor's human rights commitments?

PHASE 2: Contract Negotiation

PURPOSE: To align with vendors when terms are set in contracts on: project details, expectations on practices/project design decisions that can impact workers, how decisions will be made during the project, and mechanisms for monitoring project and worker-wellbeing.

QUESTION CATEGORY	QUESTIONS / DISCUSSION TOPICS
Setting expectations	What grievance mechanism will be available for workers to raise concerns and escalations?
	Who will be responsible for monitoring these questions and responding to workers?
	What specific language should be included in contractual terms to reflect and/or enforce an industry standard for each element related to worker conditions in the data enrichment pipeline, e.g. specific language on minimum wage payment obligations?
	Who will be involved in monitoring the progress on various projects under this contract from both sides? How often will they meet?
	What will the grievance mechanism be for workers for escalations?
	Who will be administering and monitoring this? A third party organization, the vendor, etc.? What is their process for doing so? What are the privacy considerations?
	How can workers get clarification on instructions and project guidance?
	Who will be responsible for monitoring these questions?
	How will workers be surveyed on general satisfaction for a given data enrichment project? How often?
	How will surveys for workers be designed and by whom?
	Will these include more in-depth questions around worker wellbeing?
	Who will be able to access the survey results?
	Who will be responsible for addressing any issues that get raised?
	How do these worker wellness practices impact costs for the vendor, and who is taking on the cost of these practices?
	What are the contractual incentives / penalties for meeting or failing to meet the agreed-upon worker wellness practices?
	How might we ensure that these incentives/penalties are visible or actionable at the ecosystem level, so that the impacts could reach a broader group of customers/vendors?

PHASE 3: Project Management & Monitoring

PURPOSE: Monitoring and Making Corresponding Adjustments to the Project

Ensure that working conditions for data enrichment workers are constantly being monitored and the team (vendor + AI company) is making adjustments necessary to resolve issues and improve conditions as needed

QUESTION CATEGORY	QUESTIONS / DISCUSSION TOPICS
Discuss Weekly	Review feedback and volume of questions from workers: Assess if there is a need to provide additional training or clearer instructions for workers
	Flag additional issues related to quality, throughput, and worker sentiment
	Share advance notice around if project requirements are expected to change so there is sufficient time to operationalize changes and adequately re-train workers on new instructions, if any.
	Adjustments needed to any expectations of workers based on the data (e.g. adjusting productivity targets based on actual time taken to complete tasks if productivity rates are set for the project, adjusting expectations if the demands of the work are too taxing on workers)
	Give direct feedback to vendors about inefficiencies, inconveniences, and other concerns
Discuss Monthly/Quarterly	Track and assess trends for worker satisfaction, wellness, and total compensation based on worker surveys (administered based on what was outlined in the contract negotiation phase): Try to understand what might be driving these trends and plan how to make adjustments as needed
	Vendors report on compliance areas (worker hours worked, classification, etc.)
	Review trends for quality and throughput and examine potential drivers of trends/deviations
	Discuss expected changes in data volume to set clear expectations and ensure that teams have enough time to adequately prepare for changes in volume

PHASE 4: Post Project

PURPOSE: Retrospective on how things went and how to make changes that will improve experience for workers next time

QUESTION CATEGORY	QUESTIONS / DISCUSSION TOPICS
Retrospective	How was overall worker satisfaction for this project? What went well? What did not go well?
	What changes would need to be made going forward?